THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Smuggling of Palm oil

1063. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a huge quantity of palm oil have been smuggled into our country;

(b) if so, whether Government have initiated any preventive measure to curb such huge illegal inflow of palm oil into the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not. the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) Several cases of smuggling of palm oil including crude palm oil (industrial grade) and RBD palm oil have been booked by the customs field formations. All field formations have been alerted to prevent and thwart the illegal inflow of palm oil into the country.

Exorbitant hike in cement price

†1064. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that cement manufacturing companies of the country are increasing the prices of cement exorbitantly by forming a cartel;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) has issued a notice also to some companies in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government are considering to administer the prices of cement in view of the attitudes of the cement companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) As per Cement Manufacturers' Association, the average price of cement has increased from Rs. 158 per bag in December, 2005 to Rs. 229 per bag in July, 2007. The details of month-wise prices are given in the statement–I laid on the Table of the House. (*See* below).

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.